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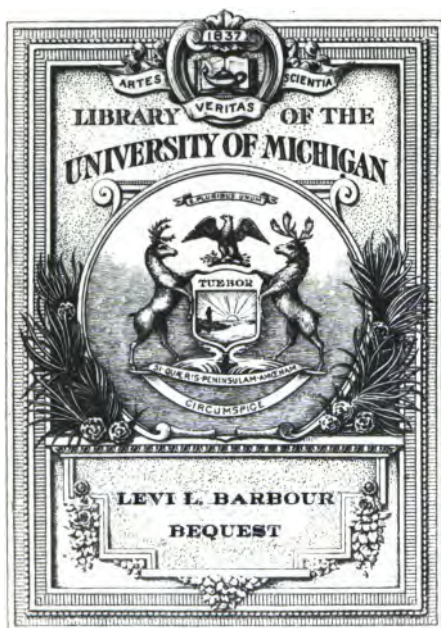
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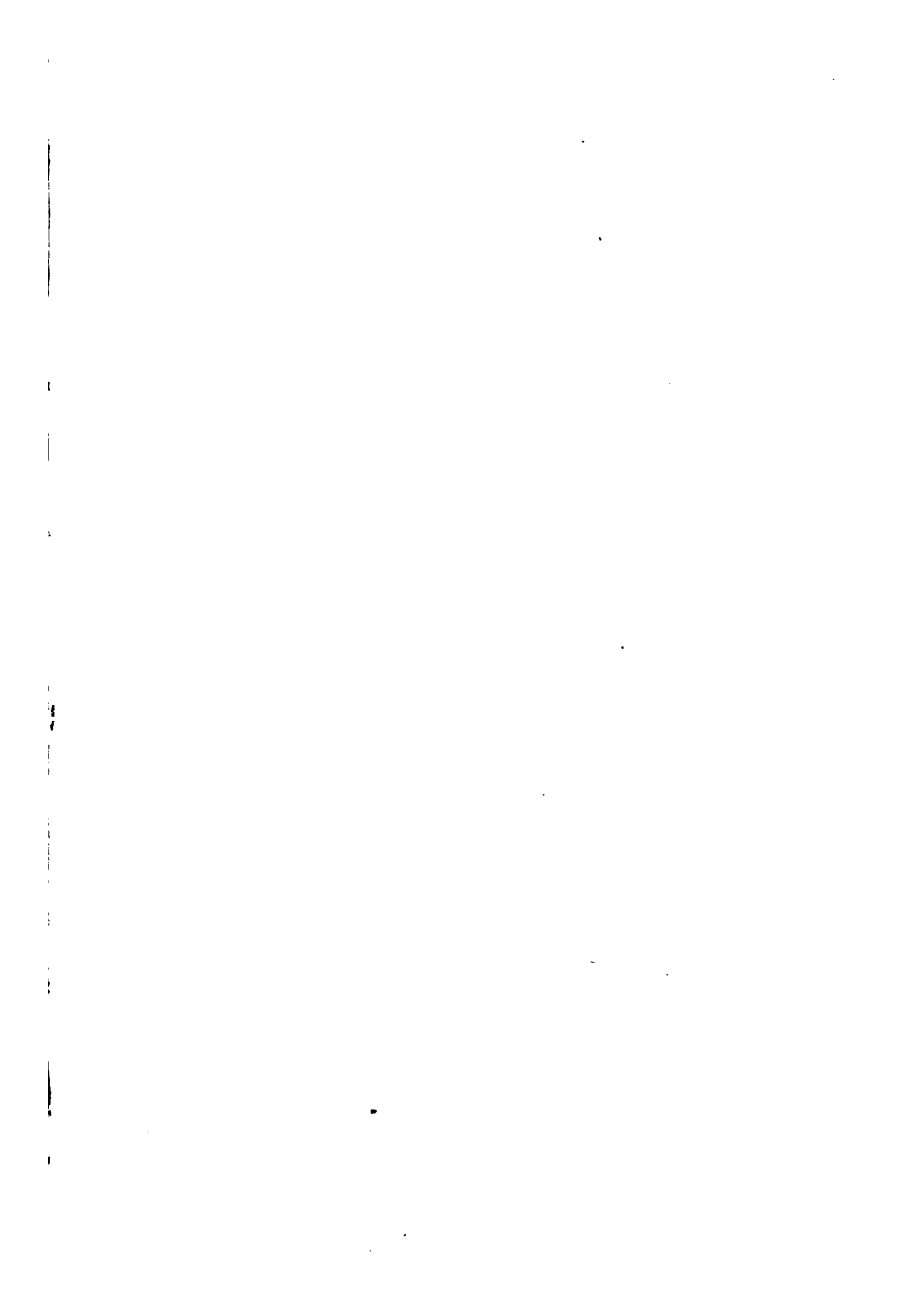
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To Levi L. Barbour
With Fraternal
regards of the Author.





BROWNING'S PARACELSUS

AND OTHER ESSAYS.

BY
J. D. BUCK,

Author of "A Study of Man," "Mystic Masonry," etc.

*"Sleep is but birth into the land
of Memory: birth but a sleep
in the oblivion of the Past."*

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TO

L. C. B.

THE MOST LOYAL AND HELPFUL OF

COMRADES

In all of the Author's Aspirations and Endeavors.



Gift
Leah S. Barbour Bennett
6-18-29

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INTRODUCTION.

We are nearing the close of the Nineteenth Century, and the spirit of unrest is in the air. Turn whichever way you will, the old foundations are being broken up, and the ancient monuments overturned. There was a period, within the memory of those still living, when causes now active seemed inoperative, and things now investigated and exploded were regarded as sacred, and it was sacrilege to question, much more to interfere with them. "Things settled by long use," as Bacon once said, "if not absolutely good, at least fit well together." Society, and even human thought, are

like a Chinese puzzle, loosen one piece, disturb one section, and the whole begins to fall in pieces. Innovation once started runs like a mighty wave, gathering force as it advances, till it sweeps all before it. Many earnest souls see only the destruction left behind, but the prophetic spirit discerns the germs of a new life springing from the ruins of the old. The tidal-wave is still advancing, yet the promise of the newer life is heralded by many signs. We are in a transition period, in the twilight that precedes the dawn.

We are told by those who have carefully studied the cyclic flight of time and the slow-revolving centuries, that the last quarter of every century for many millenniums has been marked by similar events, and that certain great truths are brought prominently forward as guiding

lights for the coming age. Progress is the law of life. The human mind is reaching out in every direction ; is looking inward and questioning the soul ; is looking upward and questioning the stars ; is looking backward and questioning the ages. It was even so at the close of the Fifteenth Century in the time of Paracelsus and Martin Luther. The same problems face us now as then, though in a somewhat different form. In the last analysis these problems all merge in one, viz., the higher evolution of man or the regeneration of the human race.

It is the undying spirit in perpetual conflict with the things of sense and time ; the sacred fire on the altars of life, illumining the steps by which we ascend to the *Adytum* of Illumination. It has ever been the mission of genius

to sense this conflict, and discern the true light—the informing ideal, viz., the supremacy of spirit over intellect, as over matter and all lower functions in man. Wordsworth and Tennyson, Whittier and Emerson, struck the same keynote and gave no uncertain sound. “All goes to show,” says Emerson, in *The Over-Soul*, “That the soul in man is not an organ, but animates and exercises all the organs; is not a function, like the power of memory, of calculation, of comparison, but uses these as hands and feet; is not a faculty, but a light; is not the intellect or the will, but the master of the intellect and the will; is the back-ground of our being, in which they lie—an immensity not possessed and that can not be possessed.”

And, again, says Emerson, quoting from Swedenborg, “It is no

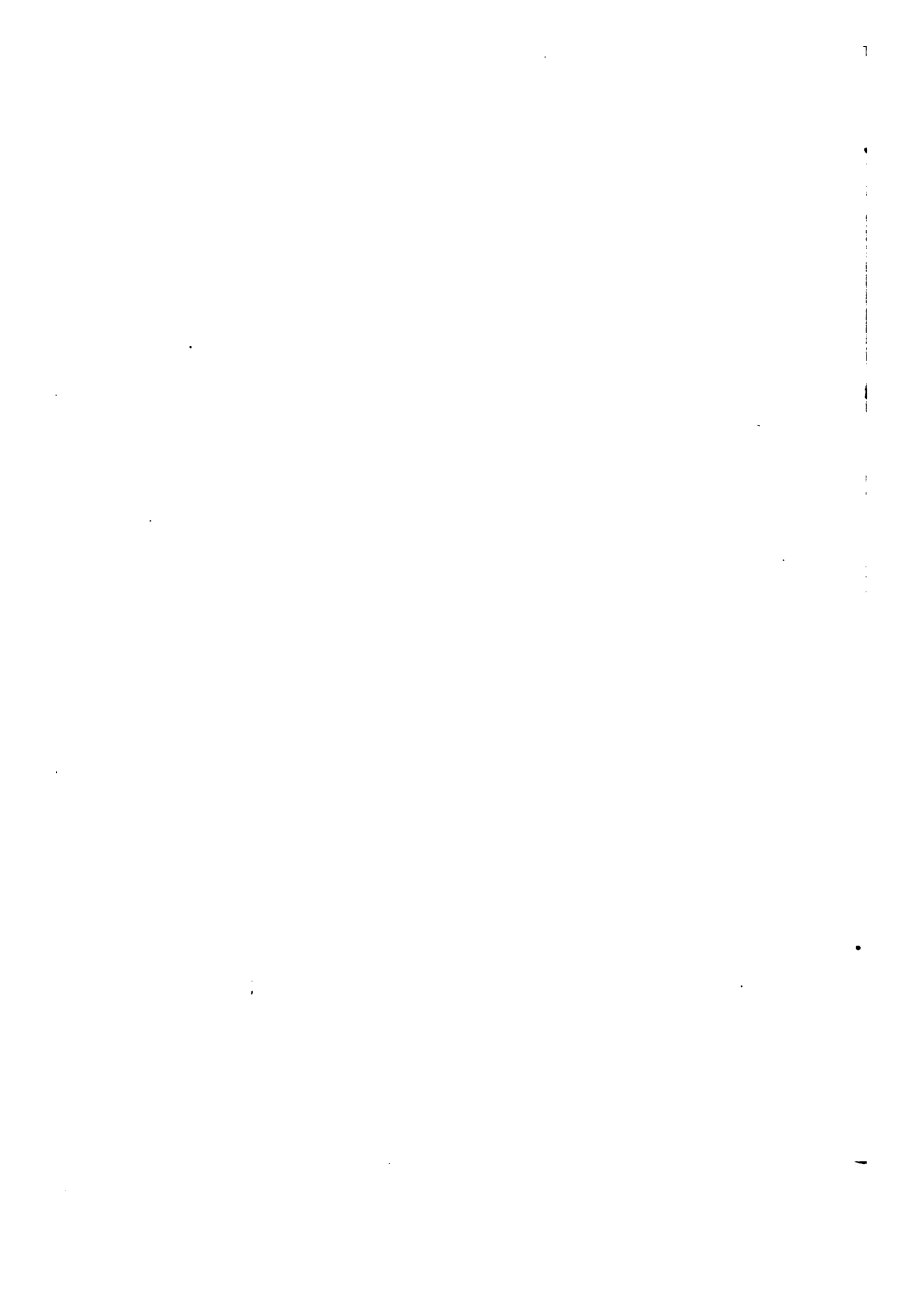
proof of a man's understanding to be able to confirm whatever he pleases; but to be able to discern that what is true is true, and that what is false is false; this is the mark and character of intelligence." It is this power of discernment, this spiritual perception, that is the guiding light of genius and its oft-inspiring theme.

Among the inspired prophets and seers of this "Light of the Logos" stands Robert Browning. Discerning this awakening spirit in man, and the needs of the coming age, his genius lit a lamp from the sacred fires on ancient altars and bore it aloft: Too high, as yet, for the plodding crowd: Too pure for the market-place, and the tables of the money-changers, it shines like a new star in the dawn of the coming age. The astronomers of the intellectual firmament

have been puzzled in assigning it to any constellation, and have often regarded it as a comet, a wanderer among the stars. They have hardly yet defined its orbit, calculated its revolutions, or tabulated the perturbations produced thereby. Browning himself gave them its true sign, but left others to determine its magnitude. "Spirit is not mind, nor from mind, but above it." The new planet shines not in the star dust of the milky-way, but in the pure ether from which it has emerged—the "spirit of the air," as Paracelsus called it.

The new age builds toward Robert Browning, but the close of the Twentieth Century will not quench his light. It is sixty years since Browning published his *Paracelsus*. Such a production from a young man of twenty-three, shows how clear the light of genius shone in him,

and how the spirit that is "above intellect" illumined his mind. A brief outline of the times and the career of Paracelsus may serve as a back-ground to the still briefer glance at Browning's creation, which, with a glance at the philosophy involved, is all that is here attempted.



BROWNING'S PARACELSUS.

Paracelsus was born in 1493, and was twenty-four years old when the great Protestant Reformer affixed his ninety-five propositions to the castle church at Wittenberg, while Luther was ten years his senior. The dawn of the Sixteenth Century called into existence a new era of thought, the result of which has colored all subsequent events. The discovery of a new world in the west and the dawn of religious liberty in the east—events crowded into a single quarter of a century—mark the beginning of the career of Paracelsus, who in his own day was called the “Medical Luther.” A strong character and a great innovator

like his illustrious contemporary, Paracelsus created strong partisans who vied with each other in immoderate praise and blind hatred and condemnation of the physician who dared to ridicule Galen and Hypocrates and to dispute the ancient authorities in the healing art. His great learning was undisputed, but it served only to increase the hatred of his hereditary enemies, the Doctors and the Apothecaries, who condemned him for writing his treatises in the German language instead of Latin, and when by means of his skill he was able to cure a number of cases publicly assigned him as tests, and declared incurable by Doctors of his time, such as Elephantiasis, his enemies, as might have been expected, but clamored the louder for his destruction. There are few epochs in the history of human progress when it is

either safe or desirable to advance far beyond the borders of conservative mediocrity.

This fact has often led to concealment of wisdom and retarded the progress of man. It was even so in the case of Paracelsus. Great as were his discoveries and the reformations he sought to inaugurate, his most intimate disciple condemned him bitterly for concealing the sources and extent of his knowledge, though the disciple repented his injustice after the death of his master. Obligated on more than one occasion to seek safety in flight for his opposition to bigotry and vested rights that were public abuses, the great Physician had learned the necessity and the art of concealment.

Paracelsus, the Physician, the Reformer, the Philosopher, is idealized by Robert Browning and made to portray

the struggles of an aspiring soul in its evolutionary journey. It becomes us, therefore, to inquire whether Browning has read into the life of Paracelsus an ideal and a meaning, an aim and a result, largely his own, or whether he has only idealized a picture the outlines and features of which were actual existences and capable of verification.

Recorded incidents in the life of our subject will be entirely inadequate to solve the problem. No estimate given by his contemporaries, whether friend or foe, will materially aid us in our search. The knowledge which he concealed might, indeed, be of great service, and the clues to that knowledge are not difficult to follow; they are to be found in the philosophy which he taught.

The concealment complained of was altogether due to the ignorance and

superstition with which he was surrounded and from which even his disciples were by no means free. The power to impart knowledge is always limited, and is confined to the capacity of the student to apprehend, and whenever the teacher transcends these natural barriers, he is misapprehended and usually condemned.

As City Physician at Basel, and Professor of Physic, Medicine, and Surgery by appointment of the City Council, Paracelsus made every effort to impart his knowledge, but, after three years spent in such efforts, he had to leave the city secretly and hurriedly in order to avoid the unpleasant consequences that threatened him. He wandered from place to place consorting with people in every grade of life, with the avowed object of learning whatever might be gained

from the most humble and obscure, no less than from the rich and powerful, and he practiced the art of healing among the poor gratuitously. The rich noblemen promised him great rewards if he should be able to cure them, and after recovery paid him with ingratitude and even persecution. Paracelsus left no worldly goods except his writings, generally transcribed by his disciples, and these are imperishable. "Those who remain at home," says Paracelsus, "may live more comfortably than those who wander about; but I neither desire to live comfortably, nor do I wish to become rich. Happiness is better than riches, and happy is he who wanders about, possessing nothing that requires his care. He who wants to study the book of Nature must wander with his feet over its leaves. Books are studied

by looking at the letters which they contain : Nature is studied by examining the contents of her treasure-vaults in every country. Every part of the world represents a page in the book of Nature, and all the pages together form the book that contains her great revelations." This is hardly the language of a vagabond wandering aimlessly over the earth. Paracelsus visited Germany, Italy, France, The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia. He went to India, was taken prisoner by the Tartars and brought to the Khan, whose son he afterward accompanied to Constantinople. There are three important factors in the experience of Paracelsus to be taken into account. First, his instructions under his earliest teacher, Trithemius; second, his visit to India; and third, the philosophy revealed in his

writings; and by the light thus derived, we need have no difficulty in determining the sources and nature of his knowledge, his motive being clearly revealed by his utterances and his life.

Johann Trithemius was abbot of St. Jacob at Wurzburg and was celebrated as one of the greatest of Alchemists and Adepts in Occultism. Young Paracelsus was under the abbot's instruction between his sixteenth and twentieth years, and went to India between his twentieth and twenty-eighth years. Much as Paracelsus revered the book of Nature, and much as he may have learned by wandering with his feet over its leaves, he was by no means a self-taught philosopher. Others both before and since his day have traveled far more extensively than he, without discovering "Nature's

'treasure-vaults" or learning how to interpret her revelations.

From Trithemius, Paracelsus derived the key that unlocked the secret vaults of wisdom, and in Indian lore he found the ancient philosophy of which he held the key. The careful student will find not the least difficulty in discovering the same philosophy in the writings of Trithemius and the Eastern Sages; in fact, the writings of the former are but commentaries on the latter. Cosmogogenesis and Anthropogenesis—the evolution of worlds and the evolution of man—are the subjects treated of. The Macrocosm—the great world or Cosmos, and the little world, Microcosm or man, furnish the theme, and the philosophy is a synthesis of the whole. This philosophical scheme of evolution differs essentially from that of modern times, which con-

finds itself largely to physical evolution alone in its attempt to reduce all problems to terms of mass and motion. The older philosophy regards evolution as proceeding simultaneously on three planes: the physical, the mental, and the spiritual; the co-ordination of which determines the final result. This is the only sense in which the term synthesis can be legitimately applied to human evolution. Such a basis not only includes all evolutionary processes possible to conceive of, but also includes every kind of knowledge and every sphere of activity possible for man. Time will not permit of demonstration or of illustrations in support of this view. I must refer my readers to the writings under consideration for proof.

Paracelsus shows himself to have been perfectly familiar with this grand and

far-reaching philosophy. It not only appears fully in his writings, but the ideal of renunciation and his indifference to fame, riches, and even comfort, shows conclusively that he lived in accordance with what he believed and taught. He was therefore misunderstood and misrepresented, even by his zealous followers, who could not bring themselves to the point of casting all things into the alembic in order that the pure gold of truth might alone survive as their one only possession. The ideal was too high; the renunciation too great.

It is this characteristic in the life of Paracelsus, I think, that Browning seizes as the ideal and the theme of his great poem; and, making it less austere than cold philosophy, and more human by dramatic representation, and the "sweet reasonableness" of loving friends and

the companions of his early life, has added to the fame of Paracelsus, and assured the immortality of his own, even if he had written nothing else.

This view might be questioned from the laments and disappointment put into the mouth of Paracelsus by Browning. But what great soul imbued with a high ideal ever felt that all of the highest and best aimed at had been achieved? Herein lies the evidence of strength, not of weakness. It is left to weak and shallow natures to be content and complacent with the humble attainments of one short life.

The really wise see, as plane after plane unfolds, plane after plane beyond; and the narrow horizon of the known but makes broader the expanse and more prophetic the vision of the unknown. It is this prophetic vision, based on real knowledge, and guided by a faith that is

sublime, that constitutes the day-star of the soul, and the guiding "pillar of fire" by night. I am not aware of any evidence showing Browning to have been, at so early a date in his career, familiar with the philosophy taught by Trithemius, by Paracelsus, and the Eastern Sages, as such. I think it more likely that the poet's intuition, born of real genius—his "apperception," as Leibnitz would have termed it—sensed the truth from a plane higher than reason and clearer than philosophy, and, passing by the forms of thought, gave the essence and the ideal that he saw.

This view is not only sustained by the poet's own utterances, but really furnishes the key to his whole work. "Mind," he says, "is not matter, nor from matter, but above." Paracelsus is made to say: "Truth is within ourselves; it takes no

rise from outward things, whate'er you may believe. There is an inmost center in us all, where truth abides in fullness; and around, wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it 'in, this perfect, clear perception—which is truth." . . . "To know, rather consists in opening out a way whence the imprisoned splendor may escape, than in effecting entry for a light supposed to be without."

The guiding light and the zest that holds the soul to the quest for truth, in thus "opening out a way for the imprisoned splendor to escape," is Faith. Not blind belief where the "Spiritual functions are smothered in surmise," but rather what Wordsworth calls "a passionate intuition," or as Browning puts into the mouth of Bishop Blougram, "With me, faith means perpetual unbelief kept quiet like the snake 'neath

Michael's foot, who stands calm just because he feels it writhe."

The work of real genius, whether in literature or in art, consists no less in the perfection of details, and in the co-ordinate proportion by which they are concealed, than in the final result through which the creative spirit shines. In the very process of building the temple the wood on the sacred alter bursts into flame, and all meaner things disappear in the presence of the dazzling light. So a living soul leaps from the canvas in answer to our questioning gaze; or a warm and inspiring human heart throbs from the printed page responsive to our own, and aids us in "opening out a way for the splendor"—in us—"to escape."

Apply whatever test we may to this immortal poem of Browning's and we shall not be disappointed. We may

come to it again and again with ever-increasing admiration and profit. The poem has sometimes been called mystical and obscure. We shall do well to be very sure that the obscurity complained of is not an excuse for our own dullness of apprehension; and as to mysticism, it is a name but seldom understood.

True mysticism is to the quest for wisdom what the principle of life is to the body, viz., the revealer, that which transports the clod into cloud-land in order that it may be hung with rainbows and illumined with light. True mysticism first senses the spirit behind phenomena, and, ascending from intellect to intuition, guides the soul to its heritage with Divinity. By lifting the body up it brings the spirit down, and is thus the revealer and interpreter of

Nature—the most practical and beneficent of all our forms of thought. Whenever man seeks to lift the veil of matter that hems him in, and to rise above the plane of the animal senses, he treads on the border-land of mysticism ; and every step toward clearer vision is a revelation from the hitherto unknown mystic realm.

Browning was a mystic in the truest sense; and yet there can not be found in all literature a more joyous and vital sympathy with sensuous life, and the affections of the human heart than he has portrayed. He was as free from a sickly sentimentality on the one hand as from intellectual dullness and mystification on the other. He stands, I think, as the Apostle of Health in body, mind and spirit, and his creations are therefore living verities.

It would be audacious to attempt in

one short hour to analyze a work of such magnitude, depth and subtlety as Paracelsus; to condense to briefer space what genius has already condensed to an hundred pages, or to extract the theme where the composition is so varied and the harmony is so complete.

And yet in all modesty and sincerity we may glance at this creation of genius and gather inspiration, and bestow homage for the passing hour.

We are introduced to Paracelsus as a young man of twenty, full of a noble purpose, and in the midst of affectionate and inspiring friends. Here is his first confession, showing how clear his brain, how warm his heart: "Festus knows he holds me one scarce aware of all the joys I quit; when Festus learns that every common pleasure of the world affects me as himself; that I have just as

varied appetite for joy derived from common things; a stake in life, in short, like his; a stake which rash pursuits of aims that life affords not, would as soon destroy—he may convince himself that I shall act well advised.”

“I was not born informed and fearless from the first, but shrank from aught which marked me out apart from men.”

And then he shows how Festus, his friend, after Trithemius, his teacher, “taught him (me) to know mankind and know himself” (“myself”), “the sovereign proof that we devote ourselves to God, is seen in living just as though no God there were.” Festus says: “You left with me our childhood’s home to join the favored few whom, here, Trithemius condescends to teach a portion of his lore,” “and not one youth of those

so favored, came, resolved like you to grasp all, and retain all, and deserve by patient toil a wide renown like his." It should be borne in mind that John Reuchlin, a great Kabalist, and said to have been the greatest linguist and scholar in his day in Europe, was the intimate friend and preceptor of Luther. Luther's first course of lectures was delivered on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle. It may be thus seen that the men who really inaugurated the renaissance of the Sixteenth Century were taught and inspired by the occultists, Trithemius and Reuchlin, though the reign of faith ere long eclipsed the rejuvenated philosophy.

But to continue our quotations. Browning makes Festus say of the aim of Paracelsus, it "was so vast in scope" that it "desired to gain one prize in place of many—the secret of the world, of man,

and man's true purpose, path, and fate." The character of this aim consists "mostly in this, that in itself alone shall its reward be; not an alien end blending therewith; no hope, nor fear, nor joy, nor woe, to elsewhere move you, but this pure devotion to sustain you or betray; thus you aspire."

Paracelsus replies: "I profess no other share in the selection of my lot, than this my ready answer to the will of God who summons me to be his organ. God appoints no less the way to praise, than the desire to praise, the setting forth such praise the natural end and service of a man, . . . and such praise is best attained when man attains the greater welfare of his kind."

"Be sure that God ne'er dooms to waste the strength he deigns impart." . . .
"Be sure they sleep not whom God

needs." . . . "This is the faith in which I trust." "And I am young, my Festus, happy and free; I can devote myself; I have a life to give." . . .

. . . "'T is time new hopes should animate the world, new light should dawn from new revealings to a race weighed down so long, forgotten so long." Festus asks regarding this mission toward which Paracelsus aspires: "Why not pursue it in a fast retreat, some one of learning's many places?" Paracelsus replies that from his earliest youth he has been possessed by a true fire, an inspiration to this great work. ✓ He would "know, not for knowing's sake, but to become a star to men forever." The "true fire" spoke—the inward voice—"There is a way: 'T is hard for flesh to tread therein, imbued with frailty—hopeless, if indulgence first

have ripened inborn germs of sin to strength: Wilt thou adventure for my sake and man's apart from all reward?" Paracelsus says: "I answered not, *knowing him.*" . . . "Thence forward . . . he proceeds"—loaded with fate—"so that, quailing at the mighty range of secret truths which yearned for birth, I haste to contemplate undazzled some one truth—its bearings and effects alone—at once what was a speck expands into a star."

This reminds one of the answer given by Sir Isaac Newton, when asked how he had been able to make such great discoveries. He replied: "I keep the subject constantly before my mind, revolving it o'er and o'er, till by and by the full-orbed truth appears." Genius may have various methods, but the

fountain of inspiration is ever the same,
for Truth is One.

So much for the aspiration of Paracelsus, which is so fully elaborated and worked out in the first part of the poem. Aspiration alternates with attainment through the five parts, representing different stages in the life of Paracelsus, into which the poem is divided. The thought in the poem itself is already so condensed, and the form of expression so terse, that in following the theme one may scarcely discern it in one part more than another. In his periods where attainment is the theme, the motive is the same, but success not a thing to be envied or to boast of. "At worst," he says, "I have performed my share of the task. The rest is God's concern; mine merely this: to know that I have obstinately held by my own work." . . .

"What's failure or success to me? I have subdued my life to one purpose whereto I ordained it; there alone I spy, no doubt, that way I may be satisfied."

. . . "I have made life consist of one idea."

. . . "My aims remained supreme and pure as ever." In the second part of the poem occurs a long episode between Paracelsus and his early friend, Aprile, the poet. Paracelsus aspired to know; Aprile, to love infinitely, and be loved! So far, each is shown to have erred, and how love and wisdom should unite in man. In the death scene, Paracelsus exclaims: "Die not, Aprile; we must never part. Are we not halves of one dissevered world whom this strange chance unites once more? Part? Never, till thou, the lover, know, and I, the knower, love—until both are saved." This wisdom without love, dis-

interested as was his motive, Paracelsus all along laments as his "sin."

After the death of Aprile, Paracelsus returns to his friend, Festus, is appointed professor and city physician at Basel, and meets at first with great success, till his enemies have time to rally and compel him to seek safety in flight. In conversation with Festus, Paracelsus says: "I have vowed long ago my worshipers shall owe to their own deep sagacity all further information, good or bad." . . .

"Why strive to make men hear, feel, fret themselves with what 'tis past their power to comprehend?" As Festus probes Paracelsus to find a reason for his despondency, he replies: "I have said it, dearest Festus; for the manner, 'tis ungracious, probably. You may have it told in broken sobs one day, and scalding tears ere long, but I thought

best to keep that off as long as possible."

"No; it must oft fall out that one whose labor perfects any work shall rise from it with eye so worn that he of all men least can measure the extent of what he has accomplished. He alone who, nothing tasked, is nothing weary too, may clearly scan the little he effects." In speaking of the will of God, Paracelsus puts it differently now from earlier days. "The constant talk that men of your stamp," he says to Festus, "keep up of God's will, as they style it, one would swear man had but merely to uplift his eye, and see the will in question characterized on the heaven's vault. 'Tis hardly wise to moot such topics. Doubts are many, and faith is weak. I know as much of any will of God as knows some tortured brute what man, his stern lord, wills from the perplexing blows that

plague him every way; but there, of course, where least he suffers, longest he remains—my case; and for such reasons I plod on." . . . "God's intimations rather fail in clearness than in energy; 'twere well did they but indicate the course to take like that to be forsaken." . . . "We have to live alone to set forth well God's praises."

In the last six pages of the poem, in a long and uninterrupted discourse—the dying words of the philosopher to his friend—Paracelsus reviews his life, states his ideals, his methods, and involves, rather than explains, his philosophy. All through the poem, faith and aspiration alternate with uncertainty and despondency; yet through all, the ideals are held with a grasp that never for a moment weakens, and pursued unerringly, though with varying speed.

Browning has taken the life and the philosophy of Paracelsus, so far as revealed in his life and writings, as a background, containing sufficient novelty and enough of the mystical and unknown upon which to idealize the evolution of the aspiring soul of man. Wisely trained in his earliest youth in spiritual things, and keeping himself unspotted from the world, conceiving a noble mission to be fulfilled by him at any cost, and with a faith sublime enough to compass all his doubts and survive even in the face of seeming failure, the hero of the poem is made to epitomize the journey of humanity after natural selection has given place to what Prof. Fiske has termed "Divine Selection," and I doubt if any thing commensurate with the range of thought, the analysis of experience, the measure of motive and design, and the

true conception of the highest ideal in the perfectibility of man, can be found elsewhere in modern literature. That this was Browning's conscious design is shown by words put into the mouth of the dying Paracelsus.

Tracing the evolutionary wave up through all lower life, he says: "The worm has enterprise, deep quiet droops with evening, triumph takes the sunset hour, voluptuous transport ripens with the corn beneath a warm moon like a happy face; and this to fill us with regard for man; with apprehension of his passing worth, desire to work his proper nature out and ascertain his rank and final place." "For these things tend still upward, progress is the law of life, man is not Man as yet." He speaks of hopes and cares that "grow too great for narrow creeds of right and wrong

which fade before the unmeasured thirst for good while peace rises in them forevermore."

X The genius and the intuition of the poet appeal to the emotions and the aspirations of men, for who among us does not feel far more than he can either express or understand? This is what Ruskin long ago marked out as the mission of true poetry, viz: "To offer noble grounds for noble emotions." Ideals are found in the spiritual atmosphere about us, that are thence fashioned into forms of thought, and wrought, little by little, by daily experience into the fabric of our lives.

There is thus furnished both a zest in life and a conscious aim or ideal to be striven after; in other words, a living faith, "with perpetual unbelief kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's

foot;" not blind belief that lulls the soul to sleep with shallow self-complacency and sense of safety from the fires of hell.

But, says one in this materialistic age, this is all very well in poetry; interesting and beautiful, if you please, but not at all practical. It was the philosophy embodied in the writings of Paracelsus, the key of which he drew from the teachings of Trithemius that led him to his great discoveries and gave him such ascendancy over the common men of his age. They had indeed the power to put him down and compel him to flee for safety, but they could not discover his secrets, undo his work, or really tarnish his fame. Even the present age has hardly grown to his estate, because it still gropes in the slough of materialism, and rings the everlasting changes

on the transformations of matter, losing sight of the indwelling spirit, the mover and inspirer of all.

The sublime philosophy with which the writings of Paracelsus fully agree, and furnish continuous though fragmentary proof, establishes three fundamental propositions :

(a) "An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable Principle, on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude. It is beyond the range and reach of thought." Something like this idea may be drawn from what Emerson calls the "Over-soul," and from Herbert Spencer's "Unknowable," and it has been vaguely conceived and expressed by many names; but in no case has it been set forth in its

philosophical bearings and held intelligently and consistently as in this old philosophy. Plotinus called it the "Principle of Principles," but he was versed in the ancient philosophy.

(b) The second proposition is, "the eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane; periodically, the playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing, called 'the manifesting stars' and the 'Sparks of Eternity.'"

(c) "The third proposition is, the fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage of every Soul, a spark of the former, through the cycle of Incarnation (or necessity), in accordance with Cyclic or Karmic law, during the whole term." Upon these three

fundamental propositions, applicable alike to Cosmogogenesis and Anthropogenesis, the whole philosophy proceeds; and man, the Microcosm, is, at every step, involved and evolved with Cosmos, or the Macrocosm. "Progress is the law of Life," declares Paracelsus, and in the magnificent oration put into his mouth by Browning in the closing scene, he clearly portrays the unity of all life that climbs to man's estate, and the Oneness of all Nature that bodies forth one universal plan. Paracelsus says: "I possess two sorts of knowledge: one vast, shadowy hints of the unbounded aim I once pursued; the other consists of many secrets, caught while bent on nobler prize—perhaps a few prime principles which may conduct to much. These last I offer to my fellows here. Now bid me chronicle the first of

these—my ancient study—and in effect you bid revert to the wild courses just abjured: I must go find them scattered through the world. Then for the principles, they are so simple (being chiefly of the overturning sort (that one time is as proper to propound them as any other—to-morrow at my class, or half a century hence embodied in print. For if mankind intend to learn at all, they must begin by giving faith to them and acting on them.” The principles are thus shown to be universal and eternal; and, as Emerson put it, “to honor every truth by use” is the key to their efficiency in the evolution of the soul. Precisely the same conclusion is to be derived from Browning’s idealization and from the facts set forth in the writings and life of Paracelsus.

The principles, which are so simple,

are first to be apprehended, then acted on. Enter the Path. "'T is hard for flesh to tread therein, imbued by frailty; hopeless, if indulgence first have ripened inborn germs of sin to strength." Paracelsus was known to have led a life of celibacy, for which many and diverse reasons were assigned, the true one not only has Browning rightly conceived, but such is ever the rule when man seeks to become more than man. Next, the ideal of knowledge for the help of man, devoid of worldly or selfish motive, and pursued with a zeal and determination that nothing can quench or turn aside; and, finally, renunciation, or the vow of poverty. It is said by one of his biographers that Paracelsus received the Philosopher's Stone from an Adept at Constantinople, in 1521, when he was therefore twenty-eight years of age.

Browning lays the scene between Paracelsus and the poet, Aprile, at the house of a Greek conjuror at Constantinople in the same year, and makes this "jewel of wisdom" to consist in learning that Love and Wisdom are halves of one dissevered world, in whose union and completeness the lover Knows, and the knower Loves.

No gaunt and pale asceticism huddling in caves, or fleeing from human kind, is here discerned; but knowledge and love combined and devoted wholly to the service of man. With such aims, and so pursued, it is claimed that the higher faculties unfold. It is thus they "open out a way for the imprisoned splendor to escape"—the Truth that dwells within us (and is wisdom's self when crowned with Love.)

That such conceptions entered into

the philosophy of Paracelsus there can be no possible doubt; that he carried them out in practice can not now be demonstrated unless it be by the great discoveries he made and the great wisdom he possessed. He anticipated Harvey in the discovery of the circulation of the blood, Mesmer in a knowledge of Animal Magnetism, Hahnemann in the Law of Similars, and made a vast number of other discoveries and innovations. He taught by the use of symbols and wrote in allegories whenever he dealt with the profounder secrets he had acquired, not from a selfish desire to conceal, or a superficial habit of mystifying, but, as Browning makes him say: "My worshipers shall owe to their own deep sagacity all further information, good or bad." A teacher instructs the dull and the intelligent alike and in the same way. The intelligent

profit greatly by the instruction, but the dull are little benefited thereby.

Browning is not merely the interpreter of Paracelsus, but he uses Paracelsus as a mask while he interprets himself. He lifts his hero to his own grand ideals and shows alike the way to failure and success, and all through, so noble, and yet so human, conscious of frailties, yet turning ever from alluring snares to "the imprisoned splendor" and the beckoning star. If aspiration is followed by attainment there succeeds a period of despondency so natural to every lofty soul—"so worn that he, least of all men, can measure the extent of what he has accomplished."

We must not, therefore, take too literally, and never as a finality, the despondency and the confession of sin and failure put into the mouth of our hero, for

herein, through honest introspection, lies his strength and the magnet that draws him ever to his great ideal. It is rather in the periods of boasting what he has accomplished, and in scorn for the ignorance and stupidity of man, that his human frailty appears. Step by step, the poet analyzes every mood, as the deepening tide of life sweeps on, and not one phase is lost or is in vain. Even scorn, contempt, and hatred are ministering angels to the aspiring soul, where the sure rebound reveals in warmer colors—clearer light—the soul's highway. These dark gulfs being bridged and crossed, bring charity for those who falter at their brink or stumble headlong down their steep descent. These, too, will rise, purified by sore trial, and stronger grown and more glad for the smooth and sun-lit valleys and the "mountain heights where

dwells repose." All seeming evil, rightly scanned, but leads to greater good, and so the Nations climb from age to age, and man, the Eternal Pilgrim, journeys on. "Were man all mind, he gains a station little enviable."

The learning gained in any age is soon outgrown and cast aside. The same old problems front us now in other garb, yet still the riddle of the sphinx unsolved, and death is still triumphant, man immortal still. Were man all heart, and love his only theme, his heart would break at trials he could never understand, and useless misery would seem the curse of all existence; existence at its best a curse, o'ershadowed by the fear of death, and sunk at last in dread oblivion. "Love, hope, fear, faith—these make humanity;" and wisdom joined to love—these are "halves of our dissev-

X/ered world"—the empire of the soul. Love is the life of the Soul, wisdom the light of the Mind, and love and light lead man to his immortal destiny.

Most people of intelligence, now-a-days, are familiar with the history of the rise, the progress, and the results of the great Protestant Reformation, inaugurated by Martin Luther. Far less is generally known of Trithemius, the great teacher, and of his illustrious pupils, Paracelsus and Cornelius Agrippa; of Tauler and John Reuchlin, and of the society designated by the strange title, "Friends of God," or the little book called "Theologia Germanica," to which Luther wrote a most approving introduction. This was four hundred years ago. Humanity in the western world was then just waking from the sleep of the dark ages, and superstition stood with the

multitude in the sacred place of religion, and in the gross ignorance and crass materialism then so prevalent, the "Theologia Germanica" found few readers, and the "Friends of God" were believed to be the enemies of religion. Then began the reign of faith, and for four hundred years creed and dogma have usurped the place of light and knowledge. Again the slow-revolving centuries have brought us to the dawn of another century, and in its twilight the same conditions may be discerned. Many earnest, aspiring souls are groping their way and welcoming the growing dawn with thankfulness and hope. We have banished many superstitions and refined our materialism, and Salvation by faith has had its day and weakened its hold. It remains to be seen whether we are to any extent Friends of God in

the sense set forth in the *Theologia Germanica*, or whether Agnosticism on the one hand, and materialism on the other, shall again blot out the light of knowledge.

This knowledge is idealized in Browning's *Paracelsus* in a form fitted to the thought of the new age, intellectual and philosophical, rather than mystical and devotional as in the work attributed to Tauler. Forms of thought, like fashions in dress, change from age to age, but principles are eternal. Truth weaves many garbs and speaks a varied language, yet at heart it is one and unchanging.

There is a legend in the far east, told in many ways, of a beautiful face seen but for an instant at a latticè window, or again on the market-place, and lost ere the admirer could turn and speak. It is

seen again when despair has well-nigh ended the quest, and so between weariness and hope the lover journeys on until he learns at last that in order to gain his quest he must relinquish Self. It is the parable of the journey of the soul in quest of the Higher Self, or the union of the soul with its god within, dwelt upon by the mystics, and portrayed by symbol and allegory in many a legend and in all religions. The perfection of man on this earth, and not in some far-off heaven, is the ideal of the soul's evolution. As Browning puts it :

“Man is not Man as yet,
Nor shall I deem his object served, his end
Attained, his genuine strength put fairly
forth,
While only here and there a star dispels
The darkness, here and there a towering
mind

O'erlooks its prostrate fellows; when the
host

Is out at once to the despair of night,
When all mankind alike is perfected,
Equal in full-blown powers—then, not till
then,

I say, begins man's general infancy."

"Such men are even now upon the earth,
Serenè amid the half-formed creatures
round."

This is no meaningless and mystical conception drawn from the poet's fertile imagination, but the outcome of man's higher evolution, the details and methods of which Paracelsus taught and Browning fully outlines in his great poem. In portraying the methods, the aims, ideals, failures, and triumphs of his hero, Browning has grasped the schème of the higher evolution, which in some happier time shall come to full fruition. His hero,

therefore, stands idealized as the type of the aspiring soul of man; hedged about by frailties and hampered by ignorance, yet true to its lofty aim, and ever sinking self in its sublime ideal. The closing sentence is prophetic:

"If I stoop into a dark tremendous sea or
cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast; its splendor, soon or
late,
Will pierce the gloom. I shall emerge one
day.
You understand me?"

"And this was Paracelsus."

GENIUS.

There is a certain energy of soul manifest, sometimes in thought, sometimes in action, that is called genius. Though the word and the qualities it represents are difficult to define, and though often misapprehended and misused, genius is nevertheless recognized by a consensus of opinion among men, the majority of whom could either give no intelligent reason for their opinions, or would assign for it reasons the most diverse imaginable. That the popular estimate is thus vague, and that it assigns genius to those who are merely peculiar, erratic, unbalanced or insane, and who are thus excused as irrespon-

sible, by no means proves that there is no more solid and enduring basis for that which is so little understood.

In the first place, real genius is spontaneous and not studied, and its possessor is likely to be the last to claim it, or recognize the fact that he is different from his fellows in possessing it. The noisy cackle which heralds certain productions, and seeks to forestall judgment in others, is both commonplace and vulgar, and the less noisy air of conceit and self-complacency, often engendered by mediocre achievements in the field of thought or the field of action, equally stamps the individual as both shallow and void of judgment, and to attribute genius, or even a high degree of talent, to such an individual would be the height of folly. Genius does spontaneously and

almost unconsciously that which others can do indifferently or not at all.

Genius is thus "ever a secret to itself," and is creative rather than imitative. It may be ignorant of all rules of composition, and yet conform to them so that new rules may result in trying to explain how it was done; just as the anatomist may describe the muscles brought into action in boxing or fencing, and yet be without skill with fist or sword. There is thus no genius without talent, while talent alone is neither creative nor spontaneous. There is a sublime self-confidence in men of genius that is far removed from self-conceit, and is born of clear vision and identification of the Thinker or actor with his work. He is at home with it and feels sure of his ground, and may thus seem dogmatic. But there is a wide margin be-

tween such dogmatism and that which springs from ignorance or shallow conceit, and this it is which gives it recognition and authority, permanency and enduring fame. Genius deals with no barren propositions, but with living realities, and identifies itself with all it touches. The realm of genius, therefore, is the real world of essential forms, and intuition seizes the ideals of nature and of life and translates them into forms of thought or methods of action. Genius is therefore the interpreter of nature, standing above the plane of reason, yet by no means divorced from it. Master for the time of both reason and will, it brings to light things hidden in gross darkness from ordinary minds, and translates them into form and substance, life and power. It outwardly creates that which it inwardly perceives.

The mind of man is not a collection of self-acting powers and passions, not a mere bundle of attributes, but essentially a unit capable of great variety of forms of action, and essentially one.

The very word Man means "to think," and the real man is the Thinker. The various faculties of the mind, like reason, will or imagination, are the forms of action, the modes of energy, manifested by the unit, man. Without this conception of man as a unit, rather than a mere aggregate, self-consciousness is a misnomer and would be inconceivable. It is just at this point that all theories of heredity break down, and it is also at this point that the foundation and nature of genius is neither inherited nor transmitted. The apparent exception to this statement in the case of genius in music is apparent only and not real. The real

musician would be impossible unless the bodily organs responded to the intuitive genius within. But it is the vehicle, and not the driver, the instrument and not the player, that must depend on heredity. Heredity furnishes the soil and conditions of growth, not the immortal seed of genius, here or elsewhere.

Genius is the heritage of the real man, not from human progenitors, but from the divine source of all being. The organs of action in man, the faculties and passions, furnish the theater of action of the Thinker, define its dimensions, prescribe its limits, circumscribe its powers, represent its environment, its tendencies, its bias, its predilections. All these stand definitely related to the real man, as the tools with which he works, and the conditions under which he must use them, and as no one of them, nor all together,

can constitute man, but only his condition of action, so is genius not thus determined. Genius is like a concealed fountain, that bursts forth spontaneously in a mighty rushing stream, seizing and shaping its channels as it goes!

Having located genius in the real self in man, what are its attributes, and whence derived?

Comparing men of ordinary powers with men of genius, and comparing that which most nearly resembles genius, viz., talent, with genius itself, we may be able to discover wherein genius consists.

We have already found that genius is spontaneous, self-conscious of power, creative, and "ever a secret to itself," while the ordinary individual is deficient in just these attributes, or at best possesses, perhaps, some one of them in slight degree.

Talent is a thing of growth, and is evolved by application. It is the result of cultivation; or, in one word, Experience; and there must be an inborn capacity as the measure and limit of all experience, resulting in talent. In other words, talent represents that which we have learned, and is the result of accumulated experience. The most striking characteristic of genius is that it does that which apparently it has never learned to do, or had the opportunity of learning, unless we admit the platonic theory of pre-existence. Even inborn tendencies or innate capacity, fail to explain the creative genius of a child Mozart, if we have rightly located genius as the central power of the ego itself, unless we also admit that the ego, the real self, is created at conception, and this again

would annul all theories of immortality for the ego.

If talent represents that which we have learned, and is the result of accumulated experience, and if all men of genius have talent, while the reverse is not true ; and if, further, talent belongs to the faculties cultivated, while genius is the potency and power of the ego itself, Genius is related to the Thinker, as precipitated experience. It is what Plato called a Reminiscence of the soul, and therefore a "secret to itself" on all outer planes of consciousness, for reminiscence is the memory of pre-existence. This spark of genius, that illumines space and time with the mellow light of the forgotten past, is nowhere more delicately and beautifully expressed than by James Russell Lowell, in his poem, called

IN THE TWILIGHT.

Sometimes a breath floats by me,
 An odor from Dreamland sent,
That makes the ghost seem nigh me
 Of a splendor that came and went,
Of a life lived somewhere, I know not
 In what diviner sphere,
Of memories that stay not and go not,
 Like music heard once by an ear
That can not forget or reclaim it,
 A something so shy, it would shame it
To a make it a show,
 A something too vague, could I name it,
For others to know,
As if I had lived it or dreamed it,
As if I had acted or schemed it,
 Long ago !

THE MUSIC OF THE SPHERES.

Order and Harmony are the first laws alike of Earth and Heaven; for as earth and heaven are rather contrasted conditions than different localities, so order is but the sequence of harmony, the procession of events, and the embodiment of ideas in visible things according to natural relations.

All fret and friction, all the sorrows and pain of earthly existence, can be traced directly to disharmony. Harmony and order in the life of man mean health and happiness. In thus removing all stress and friction from the body and soul, man is placed on the lines of least resistance, and the journey of the soul

through the abodes of matter becomes a march of conquest inspiring the soul with a pean of victory. Just as there is a science of music beyond all pleasurable emotions, and just as all harmony may be reduced to orderly sequence in the combination of chords according to exact mathematical ratios of vibration, so also in every department of the life of man, law and order, based on the same unvarying mathematical law, determine health, harmony, and happiness.

Music, as a mere pastime, may be soothing, comforting, and inspiring, but only when it is made to reveal its universal laws of harmony does it mount to its true place as the educator and inspirer of the soul, and as the revealer of the Music of the Spheres. It is not the highest office of music to portray the passions of man. The grandest and

most complicated symphony, with all its contrasted yet related parts, leads the mind by simpler melodies to the finale and at last to silence that is breathless, and where the wings of the soul, nerved by the confluence of harmonious sound, forget to beat the air, ecstatic vision touches the shores of the isles of the blest and the inner being opens to the singing silence, the Music of the Spheres. Every great composer, every true musician, has sensed this inner vision; every lover of music has been under its spell.

Can such a thing exist as a vagary of the emotions without an underlying law? without a corresponding universal principle? I hold that the highest office of music is not to exercise the emotions, but to lead the soul of man to the apprehension of this universal law of harmony. Its office is not to amuse, or to

exercise the emotions, but to elevate and purify them. Music thus entered into the ceremonies of all ancient genuine initiations. The whole science of music is based on mathematics, and just as the harmonious exercise and elevation of the emotions was secured by music, so the instruction and elevation of the mind was derived from mathematics. Thus the training of the neophyte in the mysteries did not end in ecstatic vision, but in knowledge of the universal laws of harmony. The harmony secured in the individual's life enabled him to grasp the laws of universal being, and opened to him the music of the spheres.

Music is not an arbitrary invention or an accidental discovery of man. The intervals in music exist in the very nature of things, and the true musician senses these as he senses light and color by con-

sonant vibrations in the corresponding organ in his own nature. Failing in this, he can only repeat mechanically certain tones, whether with instrument or voice, and his music is soulless. His execution may be technically exact, but it never touches the heart. Music thus becomes the great revealer. It opens the door to the celestial harmony. The Egyptian Isis was called "the Mother of all Living." "All that hath been, all that is, and all that shall be," and perfect harmony only could lift the veil. Modern science has re-discovered enough of the wisdom of Pythagoras and the old Initiates to discern that all light, all color, all sound, and every form in nature depend upon and are determined by different vibrations. The form of every living being, the crystallizing of every snowflake as of every physical substance, the vein-

ing of every leaf, the penciling and fragrance of every flower, no less than the forms of thought and the subtle play of human emotions, are thus all dependent upon vibration, conform to the laws of harmony, and belong to the Music of the Spheres. Nay, every atom of matter in the Universe is set to music, and whether dancing in light or coalescing in the deep dark bowels of the earth, is part of the universal diapason of nature. For the universe is not dead, but literally breathing and pulsating with life, and the law of that life is harmony. Every atom, as every sun and star, through ceaseless motion, under the law of eternal harmony, is striving for equilibrium. Man suffers only because he is out of harmony with himself, with Nature, and with the Eternal source of Being. Every pain is the cry of an organ out of tune;

every sin and every crime is but the attempt of a soloist to ignore the score of the orchestra to which he belongs and to which he is indissolubly bound. It is these discords that drown out the Music of the Spheres, and we are so intent upon our own discords, and so bound up in our own performance, that we are deaf to the symphony of life set before us, and when called to account console ourselves with the reflection that we are no worse out of time than the other members of the great orchestra!

Nature is full of music, as it exists only through the laws of harmony. Man only is discordant and out of tune.

How many have visited Niagara and heard only the roar of waters and the crash of sound? Eugene Thayer, the well-known organist, has published an analysis of the music of Niagara Falls. He

says: "I heard nothing but a perfectly constructed musical tone, clear, definite, and unapproachable in its majestic perfection. A complete series of tones, all uniting in one grand and noble unison, as in an organ. . . . I arrived at my conclusion," he says, "both theoretically and practically. Let me first call attention to the third and fourth notes, D and G. The ground note, G, was so deep, so grand, so mighty, that I never could realize it or take it into my thought or hearing; but these two tones, only four octaves lower, were everywhere with a power that made itself felt as well as heard. But it will be replied, these two notes were too low to be detected by the sense of hearing. How did I determine the pitch? I first caught the harmonic notes above them that were definite in pitch, and then, counting the

number of vibrations of these lower two notes, easily determined the distance below. And here comes a curious feature, which proves that Niagara gives a tone and not a roar. The seventh note, the interval of the tenth, was of a power and clearness entirely out of proportion to the harmonics as usually heard in an organ. Were the tone of Niagara a mere noise, this seventh note would be either weak or confused or absent altogether.

“What is Niagara’s rhythm? Its beat is just once per second. Here,” he concludes, “is our unit of time—the chronometer of God.”

But it is not alone the movement of matter over matter that results in sound, or the friction of moving bodies with the elements of our atmosphere that may become audible. The basic function of

the Ether is sound, and long before the appearance of heat and light the immensity of space is filled with resonant vibrations. Both the resistance of the ether and the revolutions of suns and stars are constant and uniform. The human ear is a time organ, and it is because there are no interruptions, nothing to break the sound of revolving planets, that we do not hear the sound they cause in boundless space. If the mutual attraction of planets is determined by their relative size and density, and they are held to their orbits by mutual attraction and repulsion, so also the ratio of movement of each to each and of each to all must coincide. But what is this but the movement of different instruments of varying tone as in an orchestra? The symphony of creation must be a fact and not a fancy, and the singing of the morn-

ing stars a veritable reality. There is a subjective side to the physical senses, and this only becomes active when the outer function is suspended. On this inner plane the senses merge in one; we hear the light and see the sound, and sense or feel the harmony. This is the reason why the greatest seers have been unable to describe their experiences in ecstatic vision. All language fails, as outer qualities disappear and the inner essence of beauty and harmony are revealed. When every fiber of man's being throbs in harmony with the universal soul of nature, the universal rhythm no longer broken into wrangling discords by the perverted will and disjointed members of man, then will man be at-one with all and join in the great symphony. Nothing so determines and defines the progress of man as his power to sense

and apprehend these revelations of nature, and his insight into that orderly sequence which determines the rhythm of motion and the harmony of law. The "other world" is far nearer than we think. The journey by which it is reached does not extend through space, or over mountain and ocean, nor need we wait to pass through the gateway of death to enter the celestial realm. We have only to open our souls to the divine harmony and silence all discords within, in order to hear and to understand the Music of the Spheres.

IDOLS AND IDEALS.

Man has been called the Eternal Pilgrim. Immersed in matter, and involved in sense and time, man faces the riddle of the Sphinx and tries to solve the problem of existence; to discover the Great Secret.

The center of man's being is a Spark of Divinity. The spirit in man is thus akin to the Supreme Spirit and the source of his conscious existence. Divinity is thus involved in man as the basis and fact of his consciousness, as the exhaustless fountain of life. It is the destiny of man to attain perfection. He descends into matter in order to gain experience, and evolves

outwardly in form the latent potencies which he involves from the fountain of all being.

In the very dawn of human existence the center of consciousness begins to expand with the first experience, and the ebb and flow of life, the inbreathing of Divinity and the outbreathing of Nature (involution and evolution) constitute self-consciousness in man. This process is typified not only in all lower forms of life, but in every organic cell where the tides of life ebb and flow from circumference to nucleus, and from nucleus to circumference. Action and reaction are thus opposite and alternate with continual adjustment, an instant of equilibrium, and then renewal of the conflict; the onward sweep of the restless tides of life.

This instant of equilibrium is rather

ideal than actual; a nascent point, devoid of extension or duration. Were it otherwise, did equilibrium obtain and all antagonism cease, death on the physical plane would result; just as by cessation of breath, the inhalation and exhalation of air, the heart ceases to beat and all the wheels of life run down.

It is thus that the conscious ego in man, the very center of his being focalizes two worlds, the spiritual and the physical, and the circle of consciousness continually expands by experience drawn from both worlds. The poet sensed this by intuition when he wrote :—

“Between two worlds life hovers like a star
’Twixt night and morn upon the horizon’s
verge.”

Here is the process of life, and the key to its interpretation is analogy. What consciousness is in its last analysis, we

know and can know as little as we can grasp Nature in its entirety. The infinitely small and the infinitely great, the mathematical point and boundless space, alike elude us. They alike represent the principle of antithesis in the form of the thinking faculty in man.

Spirit and Matter, God and Nature, Space and Time, exist in man as Ideas, and whenever he seeks to externalize these he creates an Idol.

Thought is an externalizing process. Consciousness is a passive condition; thought being its active form, its changing states. Hence the old saying: "All that I am is the result of what I have thought." We interpret all experience in terms of thought, and thus self-consciousness continually expands. We thus derive our ideas of things. Arrest thought, stop all progress in the changing

panorama of events, repeat the same experiences day after day and we build idols, and cling to our own creations as though they were living and everlasting verities.

In the progress of evolution, in the long journey of the Eternal Pilgrim, man's conscious experience must compass, not exhaust, the whole range of possible experience.

Man must know in kind all that can be known by intelligent inquiry.

Plato says: "He who has not even a knowledge of common things is a brute among men; he who has an accurate knowledge of common things alone is a man among brutes; but he who knows all that can be known by intelligent energy is a god among men."

This continual expansion of the range of conscious experience, presenting the

world to consciousness in terms of thought, slowly converts the personal and limited into the universal; transforms our limited ideas into universal Ideals. That which makes evolution possible in man is his self-consciousness through which he epitomizes in potency Eternal Nature and the Supreme Spirit. He will realize the potency in actuality step by step as experience expands.

All experience, therefore, is to be regarded as means to an end. Man is ever seeking finalities, and imagines that final happiness is to be found in those experiences which are never final, but fortuitous; can never be results but only processes. And so we ring the everlasting changes in sensation and anticipation, exhaust experience in sense and time till vitality wanes, zest dies, and the equilibrium of desire and disappointment

stops the wheels of life and physical death is the result.

The very goal at which we aim and blindly sense is the cause of our defeat. To maintain action and preserve zest while holding in the mind the ideal equilibrium, while striving consciously for self-mastery, this is the great secret. To accomplish this we must dethrone our idols and cast out desire.

Man may then establish between Faith and Reason that equilibrium which ever eludes him between desire and disappointment, or between sensation and disgust. Just in proportion as he dethrones his idols will the universal ideals take their place. When faith ignores or dethrones reason superstition is the result. Whenever reason denies faith the wings of the soul are clipped, and man grovels in the slough of matter, becomes

a worm of dust. Endow the brutish soul with self-consciousness and it becomes human. Let the personal self in man refuse to advance toward the universal and it stagnates, turns back, and descends to the plane of the brute; for it ceases to involve the divine potency, becomes lost in sensation and desire, and evolution is arrested.

Universal Nature is the embodiment of Divine Consciousness. Nature progressively evolves only as it involves the thought of the All-Intelligence. Behind Nature and beneath all evolutionary processes is the Divine Ideal; the plan toward which all Nature builds. This is Plato's *world of Divine Ideas*. These are perfect forms, or universal Ideals. Circumscribed by the personal equation, limited by self-consciousness, the experience of man gathers thence his ideas,

distorted images, mere caricatures of perfect forms. He clings to these as though they were final verities, converts them into idols, and worships the creation of his own hands. This is the great illusion; the Maya of existence.

In order to evolve with nature man must relinquish and let go. Man must first serve in order to command; must lose his life in order to save it; must continually merge the personal in the universal. The sin of separateness is the darkness of ignorance. In seeking to grasp and to hold, man eventually loses all. Self-consciousness is circumscribed, bewildered, and lost, in the consciousness of self.

True Religion ever presents the ideal of self-sacrifice, while superstition builds idols of flesh or of stone.

It is thus that the sublimity of Faith

degenerates into time-serving intellectual belief, and man builds idols after the pattern of his own infirmities. Then reason again assumes the throne, breaks the idols in pieces, and restores to the world a purer faith.

All evolution is thus stayed by the apotheosis of selfishness, and man remains involved in the pleasures of sense and lost in the illusions of matter.

Perfection is the goal of the Eternal Pilgrim, and all progress implies continual adjustment of ideas to Ideals; of the personal and evanescent to the universal and eternal. The voice alike of Nature and Divinity cries forever in our ears: Let go! Let go! Pass on! Pass on!

The question of immortality for every individual is a problem in consciousness. Conscious identity is always present as

the primal endowment of the Ego, and the continuity of experience holds from day to day with the intervening dreams of night, or with dreamless sleep. Here memory is the connecting link. The incomplete experiences of the more recent past lap over and blend with those of to-day, and so we have continuity of thought in sense and time.

People often object to Reincarnation, because they can not remember the experiences of a past life, when in fact they can not retain a tithe of the experiences of the present life.

Now, take all the elements and faculties in man with which we are familiar, and imagine man in the life after this in the subjective world to be deprived of the recollection of the events of this present life. He would there face the same problem as now.

If he still possessed a thinking faculty and ascertained that the life in the subjective world came at last to an end, the continuity of existence would be still unsolved.

If memory fails to retain the experiences of the present life during its continuance, and as with the aged, imbecile, or insane, may fail altogether, it must be apparent that memory of past experience or past lives can not be depended upon for a demonstration of continued existence, independent of all change of environment.

The proof of continued existence lies, therefore, in the conscious identity of the Ego, viz., in self-consciousness. As the theater of self-consciousness continually expands, as the individual involves by experience more and more of the Divine Life, and broadens and evolves

more toward the ideal or perfect form, so the consciousness of immortality also deepens as the kinship of all life coordinates and confirms the continuity of all individual experience. In seeking empirical testimony from without of a thing which can by no possibility be so proven, we overlook or ignore the internal evidence, and darken or obscure the light of immortality within our own souls.

The feeling or intuition of endless existence is the natural heritage of man. It is the endowment of that "spark of Divinity" which has given him self-consciousness. Man may imagine that he has "reasoned it away" as he becomes involved in the senses and outer cycle of physical life. Reason may thus strangle faith, and the individual become be-

wildered and lost through his own devices.

The belief in immortality, even that of very ignorant people, which certain agnostics and students of science assume to despise, is thus far wiser and better warranted from all scientific and philosophical considerations than any negation can possibly be.

There is a science of life which solves the riddle of the Sphinx, and, grasping the secret of death, reveals the mystery of Being.

As a mere speculation, this science is of little worth. It is not speculative, but applied science, that can become a guiding light in the Journey of the Eternal Pilgrim. As a prerequisite, one must have an open mind; must be divested of all prejudice, in order to examine dispassionately, weigh accurately, and dis-

criminate wisely. Faith and Reason must be in perpetual equilibrium—Faith as a light on the path; Reason as a compass by which the Pilgrim is guided toward the star of destiny.

All idols must be dethroned, and Truth discerned as an Immortal Ideal.

Perfection must be recognized as the goal of evolution; not a negative perfection in goodness by cutting off follies and sins, but perfection in knowledge, goodness, understanding, and power

The Pilgrim must determine his true relations to his fellow-men, and adjust those relations, step by step, as experience expands. He must not, like children wearied with play and tired of the toys that served to amuse, be discouraged at the outlook and sink down in despair. Here Faith comes in, with a sure promise of final triumph, and gives

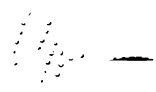
confidence to endeavor and zest in life. Nothing so clogs the wheels of progress for the aspiring soul as selfishness. No Ideal is so helpful and inspiring as that of the Universal Brotherhood of Man, and the kinship of all life. The onward sweep of evolution bears all humanity and all life toward the same goal. The selfishness of one retards the progress of all. No one can rise alone. The advance guard of the human race is ever composed of those who sink self for the good of others; of those who—

“Step out of sunlight into shade, to make more room for others.”

These but illumine the darkness with a light that is Divine, and again step aside that others may enjoy the light. The true light that shineth in darkness is ever a light from within.

The basis of all knowledge is experience. Have we not all had experience enough on the animal side, of passion and lust, selfishness and greed? Must we ring the everlasting changes on the downward scale, till faith is quenched in darkness and reason is dethroned? It is indeed more experiences that we need, but on the upward trend, toward the mountains of light, where the benedictions of peace abide; where Faith points to the star of destiny; where Reason leads to understanding; and where the Diapason of Nature is in harmony complete with the song of the Sons of God.

Man may, if he will, ever build toward Ideals, and if these recede and seem to elude him at every step, it is only that they may put on a new beauty at every rift in the cloud. He passes to-day the ideals of yesterday. He has *become* that



which lured him. It is thus that man's ideas expand into ideals, and the Divinity which is the source of all life evolves into that Nature which is its complete embodiment.

This is the At-one-ment of the Sons of God, and if it is and must long remain for us common mortals an "ideal," its apprehension as such may, nevertheless, be to the life of man what the sunlight is to earthly existence, or what the pole-star and the compass are to the sailor on darkened seas. We are often like dismantled ships in stormy seas, without mast, sails, rudder or compass; drifting at best in pleasant weather, and driven hither and thither by every wind of passion that blows.

To know the meaning of life, the method and goal of evolution, the fact